

# In the World of Music News of Motocines

## Promoters of American Opera Have Many Problems to Meet

Creation of National School Will Require Native Composers, Managers, Stage Managers and Conductors and a Transformation in the Ideals of Audiences.

By W. J. HENDERSON.

THE Opera in Our Language Foundation and the David Bispham Memorial Fund have begun an active campaign to raise by popular subscription \$1,000,000 to build and endow an opera house in which native works will be produced and native singers be heard. This does not mean that the works of foreign musicians are to be excluded, nor that European singers are to be barred. But the foreign operas must be given in English. The European artists must sing "in our language."

The scheme is ambitious. It has most laudable purposes. It assumes the existence of certain deplorable conditions. It aims to abolish them and substitute better ones. It courageously confronts firmly entrenched prejudices, long established conventions and some deeply rooted artistic convictions. It is not an enterprise to be sniffed at or dismissed with curt disapproval.

On the contrary everything possible should be done to encourage the people engaged in this undertaking. They will need a lot of encouragement, because they will meet with much vigorous opposition. But the fundamental idea upon which their plans rest is beyond all question laudable.

Somewhere in the United States there ought to be an opera house devoted to the performance of opera in the language of the country. If that is not true then there is no reason why there should be a national opera house in France, no reason why operas should be given in Italian in Milan and Rome, no reason why they should be given in German in Berlin, no reason why they should be given in Russian in Petrograd and Moscow.

### Italians Created Opera.

The Italians created opera. They have, therefore, never thought of performing it in foreign tongues. From the earliest infancy of the art they were the guardians of it. They created the elements, gathered them into an organism and developed that organism from its embryonic state to maturity. The French followed the lead of the Italians speedily, and in a few years had operas of their own. Not only did they have them in their own language but the true father of French opera, Lully, was an Italian who so saturated his mind with the genius of the French language that he became the creator of French musical declamation.

There is pressing need of going into the history of nationalism in opera. We have lately had a striking demonstration of what it can mean. The Russian Grand Opera Company in its three weeks at the New Amsterdam Theatre presented works of which the whole texture and spirit different from anything produced by any other nation. The inexhaustible fantasy of Russian song and story held all of them under its magic spell. They could not move in another land than the Russian ballet could.

It is not, however, the language that makes these works so characteristic. We have had opportunity to convince ourselves of that when we have listened to "Boris Godunov" at the Metropolitan. It was just as Russian when sung in Italian as when given in the original. But the question rises and thrives itself forward with great force whether if no operas or only a few in the Russian tongue had ever been produced in the opera houses of Petrograd and Moscow, if the dominating type had been Italian opera sung in Italian, would Russia ever have developed a national school of opera based on the literature and the songs of her own people?

### What Americans Prefer.

George Hamlin, an American singer of great distinction, said in an interview published several years ago: "It is untrue that Americans prefer opera in a language they do not understand. It is due only to the fact that from time out of mind, not having opera or an operative tradition of their own, they have been obliged to listen to opera in a foreign tongue, if at all." Mr. Hamlin was of the opinion that this state of affairs would continue as long as opera was a private enterprise and not a State institution. Opera will never be a State institution in this country. That chimera may as well be dismissed at once. Politicians can not win majorities by pledging themselves to cultivation of the arts, and that is the end of that matter.

Therefore the popular subscription plan is the only hope for someone to make the nature of a substitute for the governmental subsidy. This plan is, at any rate, democratic and holds out some faint possibility of escaping the conditions inevitably attending the organization of an operative stock company with enchanted vistas of dividends in the distance. If it is possible to interest human beings in a scheme in which disinterestedness is the prime requisite, then the latest plan for a national opera may eventuate in something better than a deserted opera house.

Mr. Hamlin's words above quoted contain a swift summary of some of the difficulties of the situation. Americans have indeed been accustomed from the beginning to listen to opera in a foreign tongue. For many years people went to "the Italian opera." They called it that and regarded it as a form of musical entertainment cultivated in Italy and imported from that country. It was not till the days of Maurice Grau and the Metropolitan Opera House that the polyglot opera company came into existence. Then the artistic doctrine was promulgated that operas should always be sung in the language in which they were written.

### Musical Values Remain.

In so far as the opera itself is concerned that is the ideal method. The musical values remain undisturbed and the complete significance of a score is published. But does the presentation reach the intelligence of the audience to which it is addressed? Yes and no. It must reach the intelligence of all those who are willing to give a little time to the study of text and also of those who understand the language when they hear it sung. The others it cannot reach. But the vital point in the whole

## Will Hays Seems Securely Anchored With the Movies

High Lights and Shadows on the News of Motion Pictures.

By FRANK VREELAND.

INDICATIONS are that Will H. Hays will remain as one of the permanent ornaments of "organized films." From remarks he is said to have dropped to his friends it is gathered that he has cast in his lot for all time with the movies, and even if, at the end of his three year term, he does not continue as the rock of Gibraltar of the industry, the former Postmaster-General will still be on hand in the photoplay business, pouring oil on the troubled waters sixteen hours a day. It is regarded as quite likely that some big cinema corporation will waylay him and put him to work at half a million or so a year.

Incidentally it is reported that his present salary isn't a puny \$150,000, or, as some have guessed it, \$100,000 annually. It is said to be—hold tight to the seat—actually \$300,000 a year, which certainly entitles Mr. Hays to his perennial smile. Moreover, it is understood that this sum was distinctly stated in his contract with the film magnates and that the entire amount for the three years was in the bank before Mr. Hays felt encouraged to sign the papers. That ought to show that Mr. Hays's reputation for efficiency is quite deserved.

Consequently, whether or not he obtains a big film executive job in the future, Mr. Hays, with something like \$1,000,000 rolling around in his vest pocket, will have more than enough to meet the town band at Sullivan, Ind., on frequent occasions and pass around cigars.

Two stills sent out for "I Am the Law," a Canadian film at the Strand this week, and "Over the Border," another "frozen north" picture at the Rivoli, show almost identical scenes in grouping, as well as prodigious use of all the snow on hand. Can it be that Royal Northwest Mounted Police stories are becoming alike?

Kellum, whose talking pictures were used by D. W. Griffith in an attempt to penetrate the fog of "Dream Street," has gone on improving his synchronization in calm disregard of the pronouncements of some observers that the public would never really take to such a "speaking likeness." It's a way inventors have. His device has just been put to a new use in the way of wrapping up personal influence.

Frank Gilmore, executive secretary of the Actors Equity Association, has been imprinted on a reel and a record, caught red-handed in the act of delivering a speech. This embalmed oratory is to be sent clear across the continent to the Los Angeles branch of the Equity, so that the movie members there can sit spellbound under his eloquence and marvel anew at the miracle of the films, which can save an orator his car fare across the country.

Delightful possibilities are suggested by this. For instance, a cinematographic fulmination by Mayor Hylan against increased fares might be kept on tap at Albany, so that the Governor could turn it on whenever such a proposal came up and give New York city hearing at a moment's notice. Or, a word in the speech would ever have to be changed.

One by one the players fade out from the silver sheet to the stage, especially when it comes to the East, since photoplay production in the East has begun to go below zero. The latest to make the grand flit is Louise Prussing, who played opposite Eugene O'Brien when Selznick was anchored to New York. She has recently nestled into "The Nest" at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre, and has been engaged by Sam Hays to play in a new German movie.

Fashions in clapping change in movie houses just as surely as styles in college boys' neckties. Back in the early megalithic days of the films, around the time when the Triangle company took over the Knickerbocker Theatre and started to revolutionize the industry offhand, the first appearance of the star on the screen used to be the signal for a loud burst of applause, so that the spectators would be alerted and disappointed when the player failed to take a bow.

Now, except in the smaller and less sophisticated neighborhood houses—and opening nights of long runs, when the battalions of friends are present, determined to earn their seats by the sweat of their hands—open spectacular scenes rarely arouse applause, and the sight of the United States flag is present.

Just in time to save the heroine from a fate worse than death no longer evokes gallery whistling, which seems to have been a thing of the past. It is a pity that the good old time of a spatter of appreciation at the end, but no one grows hoarse over it. Every one is becoming ultra discreet nowadays.

"Missing Husbands," the French photoplay which ended its run at the Criterion yesterday, spent three years in getting a toe hold in New York. "Who's the Boss?" was the title for that period before Metro finally adopted it. Gallie pictures these days are said to be tinged with socialistic propaganda.

"L'Attila" and "The Last Days of Pompeii" had to be deleted, possibly because the censors felt that youthful spectators might be roused to emulate Johnny because he was being paid to be a bad little boy.

## 'Stroke of Midnight,' 'I Am the Law' and 'Golden Dreams' New Photo Dramas



**'The Woman Who Walked Alone,' With Miss Dorothy Dalton, Also Filmed.**

**'The Stroke of Midnight,'** a Metro picture from the story by Selma Lagerlof, will begin an extended engagement at the Criterion to-day.

The photoplay was adapted and directed by Victor Seastrom and produced by Swedish Biograph. Seastrom, in addition to creating the film drama, plays the leading role, other principal parts being interpreted by Miss Hilda Borgstrom, Astrid Holm and Tore Svennberg. It is a dramatic production, depicting the experiences of a sullen, quarrelsome vagrant.

"Horse Tense," a Universal comedy, will be another film number.

Another of James Oliver Curwood's Royal Northwest Mounted Police stories, "I Am the Law," is to be shown at the Strand Theatre this week.

Edwin Carewe, director of the production, had the task of filming most of his scenes in Canada when it was below zero. The cast includes Miss Alice Lake, Kenneth Harlan, Gaston Glass, Noah Beery, Miss Rosemary Theby and Wallace Beery. Managing Director Joseph Plunkett will revive Harold Lloyd's comedy "Be My Wife."

The entertainment at the Capitol marks the celebration of the second anniversary of S. L. Rothafel's direction of the theatre. "Golden Dreams," a Zane Grey picture produced by Benjamin B. Hampton and distributed by Goldwyn, heads the list of pictorial features. The story is located in the mythical Spanish State of Chinorua and is an adventurous love story between Mercedes MacDonald, the child of an American father and Spanish mother, who comes to live in Chinorua with her aunt, a countess, and Saunders Buchanan, an American engineer engaged in the development of the oil lands on the estate of the Countess. Miss Claire Adams and Carl Gantvoort are in the leading roles. The cast includes Mmes. Rose Diana, Norris McKay, Audrey Chapman and Bertram Grassby.

## Adolph Zukor Sees Prosperity Again in Film Business

Depression Ends as Suddenly as It Began, Executive Declares.

The motion picture industry is to see prosperity once again after a year of the worst depression the industry ever has known, according to Adolph Zukor, president of Famous Players-Lasky.

"Better business conditions are not merely coming; they are here, Mr. Zukor said last week. "The year of depression has terminated as suddenly as it commenced."

This statement, he said, is based upon reports from theater connections which extend from coast to coast. As a result of those reports thirteen companies are engaged in production work at the Lasky studio, and the Long Island studio, which has been closed more than one year, is to be reopened to-morrow, when Miss Alice Brady commences work on "Missing Millions."

"A year ago I made no secret of my pessimistic outlook," said Mr. Zukor. "The industry had been severely, almost mortally hurt. Attendance dropped to the danger point and below. And it happened at a time when the industry was not prepared to dig itself in for a long fight. The prospect was dismal. But the change has come—suddenly and in no convincing way. The business is better, healthier and more substantial than ever before."

During the next six months, Mr. Zukor said, Famous Players-Lasky will release forty-two feature pictures. Before his departure for Europe Jesse L. Lasky, first vice-president of the company, arranged a production schedule covering the remainder of the year. Stories, casts and directors have been selected.

Woman Who Walked Alone," with Miss Dorothy Dalton in the featured role, will be the principal screen attraction of the program prepared by Hugo Riesenfeld at the Rialto. It is a Paramount picture from the story "The Cat That Walked Alone," by John Colton, and brings together Milton Sills, Miss Wanda Hawley, Charles Ogle and John Davidson. The adaptation was made by Will M. Ritchey. The story concerns a British countess who, after being unjustly accused by her jealous husband, leaves him to roam the world alone, like "the cat that walks by itself in the wet wood." Johnny Hines in "Torchy and Orange Blossoms," an Educational comedy and a music film will be other film numbers.

Beginning to-day the Central will revive a Universal production with Miss Mae Murray and Rodolph Valentino called "The Delicious Little Devil." The scenario is from the original story by John B. Clymer and Harvey Thew and has for theme a daughter of the tenements who becomes a dancer in a cabaret solely on the strength of the lurid past which she has invented. It was directed by Robert Leonard.

"Over the Border," the picture directed by Penrhyn Stanlaus, and coming to the Rivoli, brings together two popular screen players, Miss Betty Compson and Tom Moore, the genial Irish actor, who makes his debut with Paramount in this production. It is a story of the North, the locale being on the line between the United States and Canada. The supporting cast includes J. Farrell MacDonald, Casson Ferguson and Sidney D'Albrook. The tale was adapted to the screen by Albert Shibly Le Vito from Sir Gilbert Parker's story "She of the Triple Chevron" and tells of the love of Sergeant Flaherty of the "Royal Mounted" for the prettiest daughter of a "bootlegging" tavern keeper near the boundary line.

"Nero," the Fox spectacle, remains at the Lyric.

"Silver Wings," the Fox domestic drama with Mary Carr, continues at the Apollo.

S. Barret McCormick's "False Fronts," with Edward Earle, Miss Barbara Castleton and Frank Losee in the leading roles, will be presented at the Lyric. It is the first production from the Bradly Studios. Samuel R. Bradly directed. It relates the story of a Southern aristocrat and college hero who had no reason to affect bluff propriety at home but who, upon his father's death, finds himself with nothing but an honored name.

## Russian Ballet Returns to Paris With Novelties

Short Season of Spring Opera Opens at Theater des Champs Elysees—Harold Bauer Gives His First Piano Recital in Paris Since 1913.

Special correspondence to THE NEW YORK

New York Herald Bureau, Paris, May 24.

THE Russians have been the center of attention during the week, which has been a rather dull one both in the theater and in music. The Russian Ballet has returned to the Opera with a new program, which includes "Le Mariage de la Belle au Bois Dormant" by Tchaikovsky, which never previously has been given in Paris; "Le Renard," by Igor Stravinsky, who is living in the French capital, and two old favorites, "Carnaval" and the ballet of "Prince Igor." The choreography is under the direction of Mme. Nijinska and the list of dancers includes many names already well known to the Parisian public.

Cloilde and Alexandre Sakharoff have returned to the Theatre Mogador after a triumphant visit to London and are to be seen every other night in a program, which includes several novelties, notably Debussy's "Petit Berger" and a curious new pantomime half Burmese, half ancient Egyptian. A number of dances which were particularly successful during the Sakharoffs' winter engagement have been retained and are provoking as much enthusiasm as before, particularly Alexandre's Louis XIV. formal ballet and Cloilde's clever negro improvisation.

At the Theatre Femina Maria Kousneff has an entirely new series of acts of a vaudeville character. Short melodramas are sandwiched between chapters of a liturgical flavor. Some decorations and costumes by Leon Bakis and new music by Tcherenphine give to the performance whatever interest it possesses. The critical opinion being generally only lukewarm.

### Begins Short Opera Season.

The Theatre des Champs Elysees is beginning a short season of opera under the direction of Signor Tullio Serafin. A chorus from the Scala of Milan adds to the interest of the enterprise. In the repertoire are "Parsifal," "Lohengrin," "The Mastersingers," and by way of breaking the Wagnerian monotony, "The Barber of Seville." "Lohengrin" also has been revived at the opera with a strong cast including Mlle. Fanny Heldy and M. Franz and is enjoying a success equaling that of the other Wagnerian revivals.

At the Comedie Francaise the single event of the week has been the production of "Vautrin," a piece by M. Edmond Guiraud, based upon Balzac's "Curious Incident." The play, which has attracted the attention of Balzac fervents, but does not seem to appeal greatly to the general public. M. Genier has celebrated the fete Jean de Arc by putting on at the Odéon a species of pageant play. At the Thursday matinee the school children were invited to see it as guests of the municipality of Paris.

### Produce a Second Spectacle.

At the Theatre des Mathurins the new association of young dramatic authors, the Chimeres, has put on its second spectacle, "Martine," a curious little piece in five tableaux by M. Jean Vignancour. Bernard dealing with the tragic influence upon a young peasant girl's life of a summer flirtation with a writer on the eve of his departure for the front. Another feature of the young Victor Pellerin. The Chimeres do not seem to be making a great impression upon either critics or the general public, but their directors have the faith of little theater enthusiasts everywhere and are courageously persevering in their enterprise.

There is a new three act comedy "Un Jeune Menage" (A Young Household), by M. Louis Verneuil, at the Theatre de la Poinsiere, one of the chic little playhouses of the Boulevards. While the play is witty, like all that of M. Verneuil writes, the action is not very gripping and the moral, the necessity of thorough acquaintance before marriage, is developed in rather tedious fashion. Another of the small theaters of the Boulevards, The Michel, has mounted a two act revue "Le Bel Ange Vint" by Rip. Mile. Spinsky, one of the most popular comedienne of the Parisian scene, figures in the cast and the costumes are the work of the "couturier" Polret. The revue is satirical rather than spectacular and promises to have a fair run.

### Harold Bauer Gives Recital.

Among the notable concerts of the week have been that of Mme. Blanche Marchesi, the celebrated soprano, given in the hall of the Old Conservatory and one a few days later in the same auditorium by Harold Bauer, the distinguished American pianist. Mr. Bauer, who had not been heard in Paris since 1913, played a program of Bach, Beethoven, Schumann and Moussorgsky and enjoyed a veritable "succes de debuts," being recalled no less than a dozen times and obliged to play two final encores. He gave a second concert at the same place to-night.

Mme. Gabriel Logothetis, widow of the celebrated Polish pianist, who is now associated with an American, John Heath, late of the Damrosch Institute, in the direction of a school of piano in Paris, will make her first concert appearance of the season here on May 28.

Two young American singers, Miss Radiana Pazmor, contralto, and Miss Enid Watkins, soprano, both Californians, are giving their first individual concerts here within the next two weeks. Miss Pazmor in Salle Gaveau and Miss Watkins in the concert room of the Hotel Majestic. Miss Pazmor has gained quite a reputation as an interpreter of the compositions of M. Louis Aubert, with whom she recently appeared in London, and sang the concerto for piano and orchestra, "Le Feu Sacre" by the composer, with the "Fore Blue" with the Paderloup Orchestra during the winter. Miss Watkins is a first prize pupil of the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau and has appeared with the Orchestra de Paris.

Musical activity is on the increase in Paris during these last weeks of the season. The two outstanding events of recent days have been the premiere of the Opera Comique of "Le Noce Corintheennes," a lyric tragedy in three acts, book by Anatole France, music by Henri Busser, and the presentation at the Theatre des Champs Elysees by the Orchestra and choruses of the Society of Concerts of Lyons of its director, M. Witkowski's musical arrangement of M. Louis Mercier's "Poeme de la Maison," one of the most important of recent songs in French. Despite the great name of M. Anatole France and M. Busser's reputation as a finished and accomplished musician, "Le Noce Corintheennes" does not seem destined to enjoy any unusual success. The critics are respectful rather than enthusiastic, their praise being directed toward M. Albert Wolff, the conductor, who has recently returned from America, and toward Mlle. Yvonne Gall, who has the principal feminine role, rather than toward the composer.

The action drawn from M. France's novel of the same name has to do with the love of a young pagan, Hippas, and of Daphne, a girl who has been vowed to Christ. Hippas, who has been recovering from a serious illness. Although remotely inspired by Goethe's poem "The Bride of Corinth," M. France's plot, sustained by musical means, is decidedly original in form and tragic de nouement.

In sharp contrast with the general opinion over "Le Noce Corintheennes" is the enthusiasm provoked by the orchestra and choruses from Lyons. There has long been agitation in various circles for greater decentralization of artistic effort in France, and Lyons has become, particularly since the war, a field of intense activity in favor of the regionalist movement. The great success obtained by the provincial singers and instrumentalists in Lyons, taken as a good omen by all who wish to see Lyons, Nantes, Lille, Toulouse and other cities of importance emancipate themselves from their artistic subordination to Paris, has been taken in a more individual and independent manner. At Paris itself this sentiment is receiving great encouragement, though a few critics still remain supercilious toward all that does not come into being within two miles of the Grand Boulevard. While essentially conservative, M. Witkowski's music is admitted to possess a decidedly personal quality. 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